

My name is Darianne Johnson and I am the Executive Director of the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center in Dickinson. I would be there today in person if it were not for the fog.

The Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center (DVRCC) provides shelter and services to Adams, Billings, Bowman, Dunn, Golden Valley, Hettinger, Slope and Stark counties which encompass 10,002 square miles. DVRCC is the only shelter in southwestern North Dakota with Beulah and Williston being the only other two. There is great distance between us and we all serve different counties.

Our shelter can house 28 people. We have 4 case managers and have one case manager position that has been open for over a year. We can no longer expect the case managers at the domestic violence shelters to provide these services while being paid less than a McDonalds worker. It has been impossible to hire the case manager position as we cannot compete with the \$28/hr pay and state benefits that other agencies can provide.

In 2021 we served 70 families which included 60 children. Our case managers provide crisis intervention and emotional support to survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, human trafficking, and stalking. The case managers also provide personal and legal advocacy along with helping the survivor with any other problems they need help with. DVRCC provides food, personal supplies, and clothing to these same survivors.

**WE NEED HELP!** The drug epidemic that has impacted our country has also invaded our area. We have survivors as well as abusers that will sell their souls to get the fix they need. Dickinson has no inpatient drug and alcohol treatment center, nor do we have an inpatient mental health unit. Our staff is not trained to provide the level of care that these people need. Many times, they come from and go back to situations that are disgusting and completely unsafe. To get drugs, sex is traded, money flows and people are getting hurt.

I have worked at DVRCC for 22 years. Our community has always worked together in the best interest of our mutual client. There have been so many changes in rules and regulations that have come down that have caused chaos for agencies. We ask for help and unless the person fits exactly into the correct criteria, they do not qualify for their services. The door is then closed, and we are left with the burden of having someone in our physical presence and not being able to connect them with any help whatsoever. The stress of being powerless to help is devastating and detrimental to the staff.

What domestic violence and sexual assault agencies do every day needs to be recognized and understood by you, the legislators, and the communities of North Dakota. We quietly take care of what no one wants to see or hear about.

Respectfully submitted,

Darianne Johnson

Executive Director, Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center, Dickinson, ND